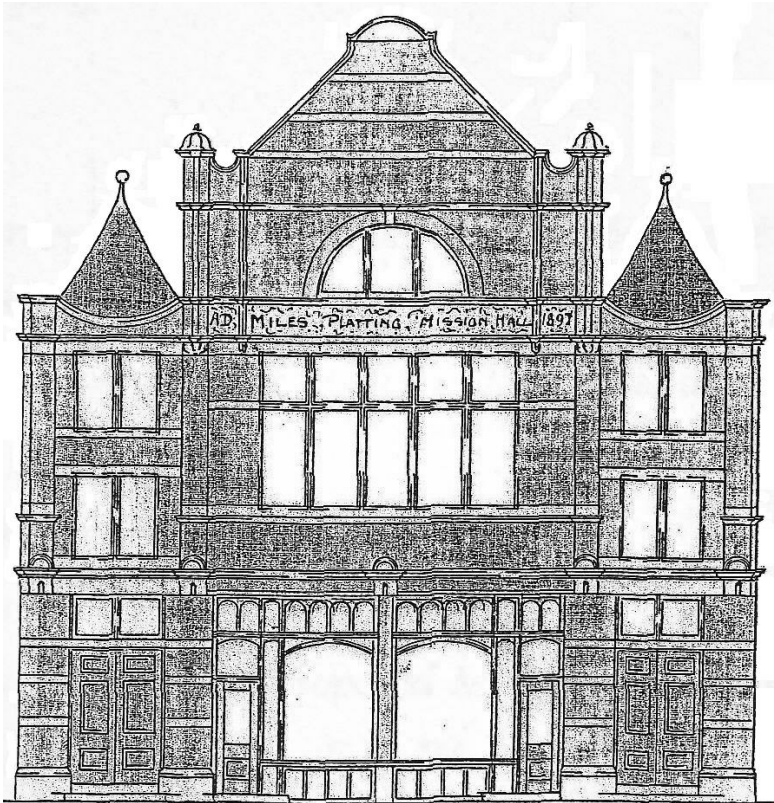


# The Forty Thieves

## A History of The Miles Platting Mission

1884 to 1900



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## **1. Introduction**

I first heard the story of the Forty Thieves as a child, my family being members of the Salvation Army in the adjoining Corps to the one where the dispute occurred, where I too fell foul of the strict disciplinary rules that the Salvation Army brought into being possibly as a result of that dispute! On leaving the Salvation Army, I was not allowed to take the instrument my father had purchased for me, which had been dedicated to the Salvation Army and therefore became their property. I eventually joined the band of the Miles Platting Mission and was enthralled to hear from the descendants of the original founders of the Mission; their account of what had happened in the spring of 1884 and during my research for this project I discovered my grandmother had been one of early converts to the Mission my maiden name being Lingard.

The History of the Mission Band is also the history of the Mission as the playing of music was part of Evangelicalism within the community. Worshipping together, sharing music brought them closer. Seeing working class men and women enjoying singing and the fellowship that Christian worship gave them, perhaps to many would be the impetus to reject their past sinful life and become part of this happy band.

## **2. Background to Research**

My research began with the oral history from the surviving relatives of the original founder members of the Mission, who still attended and worshipped there. I was gratefully allowed access to the personal papers and letters from the widows of the trustees, Mr Harold Houltram (1915-2002) many years President

of the Mission, being in office at the time of the closure in 1995, and Mr Tom Alston (1925-1999), grandson of a founder member long time secretary of the Mission who supervised the closure of the Mission. Among these papers were the original mortgage deed dated 1897 and a booklet published in 1898 giving a brief history of the Mission to that date. Many letters giving individual memories and stories from family members of the founders reminiscing about the old days and how exciting a time they had at the start of their Mission.

Mr David Hilton of the planning department at the Manchester Town Hall located the original architect's plans and very helpfully allowed me to obtain photocopies of them. I have spent many, hours going through the archive files at the Manchester Central Library and their local history department, also the library of the Working Class Movement in Salford and the local information section of the Miles Platting Library in order to gain some knowledge of how the community of Miles Platting and Ancoats lived, worked and worshipped in the nineteenth century. I wrote to the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre who gave me copies of their newspaper The War Cry published in 1884 and orders and regulations for the field officers of 1888 and regulations for bands and songster brigades printed 1907. The rules were formulated at the time of the inception of the use of brass bands within the Salvation Army. I wrote to the Baptist Union who have been unable to help me trace the Deed of Covenant drawn up by those early members detailing their intentions regarding the distribution of the Mission's assets if it were to close, however I have had confirmation of those contents from Mr Albert Richardson, trustee and Mission Treasurer at the time of the closure. He informed me that the Church and funds

were handed to the Union for them to dispose of in the spirit of the original founders' wishes, which were then to be given to the Ancoats Poor House and Free Dispensary. These no longer existed at the time of the closure of the Mission in 1995, therefore the money went towards the upkeep of a hospice for terminally ill people, which was very much in keeping with the ethos of the founding fathers.

### **3. Ancoats and Miles Platting Community**

The conjoined district of Ancoats and Miles Platting lie north of the city of Manchester and together they must have ranked as one of the most densely populated and heavily polluted industrial places in Great Britain. Miles Platting is situated on a narrow strip of land skirting the main road from Manchester to Oldham and is hemmed in on the west by the railway lines and the marshalling yards. The main coal yard was situated such that its entrance was on Ford Street, off Oldham Road, just north of Collyhurst Street.<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1. The coal would be unloaded from the railway wagons by men, who would fill and weigh the sacks of coal by hand, then load them onto horse drawn-carts for delivery to local shops and houses. To the east of the Oldham Road was the Rochdale Canal, the arterial road along which many of the factories and mills were built.

Ancoats was located to the south and was the main interchange junction of the canal complex whereby goods were brought into and sent out of Manchester from overseas. These goods travelled along the Manchester Ship Canal from Liverpool to the Salford Docks and then by canal into the Ancoats Basin for redistribution

*1     Manchester Archive Library - Map of the District first edition dated 1883  
Appendix 1*

to the various canals that conjoined there. Goods could be transported north over the Pennines into Yorkshire and south into the Midlands and Black Country. There were a great many multi-storied warehouses around this basin to house the goods in transit.

A famous visitor to Manchester in 1842 was Frederick Engels (1820 — 1895). In his book about the working class in England, he wrote a chapter on the great towns and described his visit as thus;

“In the district of Ancoats stood the largest mills of Manchester, lining the canals, colossal six and seven storied buildings towering with their slender chimneys far above the low cottages of the workers.”<sup>2</sup>

An entry in the book ‘Manchester Suburbs’ by Glynis Cooper “the origins of the name are not clear. Platt is a small piece of ground and Miles can mean a mile or a mill. The name does appear on a map of 1820 and it is most likely that Miles Platting was born a child of the Industrial Revolution. Which so changed the face of Manchester.” She further comments, “Some idea of the density of the population of Miles Platting can be gained by the number of schools and churches. There were rows of streets running back to back small terraced houses. A gas works stood on Bradford Road, which also boasted ten public houses. Ten public houses on one street speaks volumes about the living conditions and the life styles of the times.”<sup>3</sup>

2 Neil Richardson *Visitors to Manchester 1538 to 1865* published 1987 Page 37 and 38

3 Glynis Cooper *Manchester Suburbs* published in association with Manchester Libraries Page 108

Tony Fletcher a policeman on the Manchester C Division beat, gave an account of the pollution of the district in his book entitled 'Cobbled Beat' albeit, about the early part of the twentieth century, sheds light on how it must have been; "was a difficult beat to work — dirty and smelly it was not a place to idle away the time in any comfort, the area between Ancoats and Miles Platting resulted in an almost perpetual fog. Running parallel to the ground was one of the larger chemical factories from which the night staff discharged chemical waste into the atmosphere. After three months in the area helmet badges and numbers became so tarnished they had to be replaced."<sup>4</sup> "The Reverend William Muzzel the rector of St Marks, Holland Street, Ancoats was incensed at the conditions under which the people in his parish lived." In 1892 "our atmosphere is dense with smoke and laden with poison from the innumerable chimneys, chemical works and so many other works of an offensive nature. The City Health Works (Refuge Department) deals with six hundred and twenty five carts of rubbish per day, the Bradford gas works, the Allen Works, the Glue factory, the Soap and Bone Works, the Horse Slaughtering Works etc. all add up to the bad stench over Ancoats, where the death rate is higher than anywhere else in the kingdom"<sup>5</sup> Appendix 2. Along with the unsanitary housing conditions, 19th century Ancoats and Miles Platting could not have been a very pleasant place to live. No separate mortality statistics were kept, as they were all included in the city's overall figures which would be misleading as it included other less densely populated areas.

4 Fletcher *The Cobbled Beat* published by Bluecoat Press Page 21

5 Gill Hayes *Manchester Faces & Places A Hundred Years Ago* published by Memories in association with the Manchester Evening News Page 62 — Append 2

The living conditions experienced give no indication of the several individual and vibrant communities that dwelt there, or the sectarianism that divided them. Ancoats had a large active Italian immigrant population and became known locally as “Little Italy” In 1889 a local priest, Father Lyman realised their needs and formed the Italian Society. It was through this Society that the Italian immigrants took part in their first Whit Week walks in 1890. <sup>6</sup> These walks were a Lancashire tradition among the religious denominations and their members would walk in processions with brass bands and banners flying, meeting together to hold open air religious services and to show off the strength of their individual congregations. Miles Platting had many Irish Catholic immigrants and each had their own churches. St Patrick’s and Corpus Christy (Roman Catholic) St. Luke’s, St. Augustine’s, St Georges, St Mark’s and St John’s; (Church of England) there was also the Oldham Road Unitarian Church and several independent chapels. Some churches however struggled and an article in the Manchester Guardian of the 12th October 1898. It details a write-up “in connection with the United Methodist Free Church, Miles Platting appealing for locals to help with finance and bodies as the more we!! off ones are leaving the district. They want financial aid to continue their work, they have their MP on board Mr C E Schwann” <sup>7</sup> Schools like Albert Memorial and the Holland Street, Nelson Street, Fowler Street and Charter Street Ragged schools provided education for the young. There was also a Poor House and a free dispensary, which later became Ancoats Free Hospital.

6 *Richardson Manchester’s Little Italy Memories of the Italian Colony of Ancoats on local history series Page 27*

7 *Manchester Central Library Archive Dept Manchester Guardian dated 12th October 1898*



The community had some early trade union activity, the Boiler makers Union, number 3 branch, held their monthly meetings in the Dog and Partridge public house. Adult education classes were held in the evenings at the Mechanics Institute, the head master was a Mr Haddocks and in the year 1891-92 subjects ranged from Arithmetic, Shorthand/Typing, French, Dressmaking and Cookery,<sup>8</sup> all with the object of allowing the adult residents to educate themselves.

The Peoples Institute on Holland Street opened in 1889 and apart from a soup kitchen it also had enamel baths, “for a penny a hot bath and towel could be had with reductions for whole families going together!, and on the Saturday before Whit Monday, in 1891 305 people had a bath that day a total of 8,000 baths were taken that year.”<sup>9</sup> Appendix 2

The Salvation Army, which was established in 1878 entered the community in 1881 with its aggressive form of Evangelicalism, it attracted many to follow its particular form of worship, which played a vital part in the creation of the Miles Platting Mission.

#### **4. The Schism**

It was on January 8th 1881 that Miles Platting saw the beginning of the Evangelical crusade by the Salvation Army. It worked from premises on Elm Street, off Oldham Road, five streets away from the plot of land (Appendix I) which later the

8 *Manchester School Board Class List 1891-92 Miles Platting Mechanics Institution Commercial Evening School.*

9 *Gill Hayes Manchester Faces & Places A Hundred Years Ago published by Memories in association with the Manchester Evening News Page 62—Appendix 2*

disenfranchised Salvationists would eventually find a home for themselves.

A report of a speech by General William Booth in the War Cry dated 25th May 1882 when he told a rally of his troops:

*“When we go fishing, we bait our hooks with the most enticing bait we can find, if one bait does not take then we try another and another then another and if they won ‘t take any then as one of our officers said the other day, we go down and hook them on “. <sup>10</sup>*

The bait for some of these local musicians worked and three men whose names all began with Thomas (Tom), Tom Alstone, Tom Ashworth and Tom Standish,<sup>11</sup> joined the Salvation Army along with their families.

Brass Bands played a vital part in the evangelicalising methods that the Salvation Army used in order to gain converts. The Orders and Regulations issued in 1907 set in writing what had already been the established format which states “For Open Air Services the commanding officer is authorised to use the drum for the purpose of a penitent form to have it carried and beaten whenever he may think it desirable.”<sup>12</sup> Appendix 3. The penitent form within the Salvation Army Citadels for in-door meetings is a plain wooden form at the front of the hall just below the platform containing the preachers during the service, members of

<sup>10</sup> KS Inglis Edited by Harold Perkin *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England — Studies in Social History* Page 186

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Alstone *Personal Papers*

<sup>12</sup> *The Salvation Army Orders & Regulations for Bands and Songster Brigades 1907—* page 20 Appendix 3

the congregation are invited to come forward and kneel before it to answer the call for conversion.

“Brass Bands were first used by the Salvation Army to drown the roar of hostile mobs but its more permanent task was to announce and brighten army meetings and to lead and sustain the voices that sang simple bouncing hymns.<sup>13</sup> Bandsmen were expected to be in the leading edge of confrontation battles but those with family commitments were not required to do so. “Where there is any threat of prosecution by local authorities for playing a musical instrument, no bandsmen shall be required to play. In such cases, volunteers should be called for. Men with families or men whose health would be likely to suffer from imprisonment, were exempt, the young and vigorous should be encouraged to fight such battles.<sup>14</sup> The march of the bands back to the hall should be at a slow enough pace that the elderly and sick would be able to keep up with them, furthermore their playing must not disturb other denominational church services if they were in progress at the time. Not all those following the marching band would be seeking salvation. In his recollections of childhood in Every Street and of the Salvation Army open air meetings outside the Star Inn close to his home, Mike Birk writes about “a man called Billy McLeod who used to preach outside the Star Inn. He had been a prizefighter, then reformed and joined the Salvation Army, who set him up in a pot shop on Beswick Street. The Salvation Army band used to go in procession down Ashton New Road and along Every Street and Junction Street — after closing

13 *K S Inglis Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* Page 186

14 *The Salvation Army Orders & Regulations for Bands and Songster Brigades 1907*  
page 21

time all the drunks would fall in behind them and follow them into the hall to sleep it off.<sup>15</sup>

The open-air meetings must have been very lively occurrences and the band must have had to play very loudly on certain occasions. They would play such hymns as ‘Sound the Battle Cry’ composed by William F Sherman and ‘Onward Christian Soldiers Marching as to War’ words by Sir Arthur Sullivan which may have inspired those taking part in the hymns, to sing with greater effort. Many Salvationists had children who attended local schools therefore when the Salvation Army Band was asked to play once again in 1884 for the Holland Street Ragged School which they had done the previous year, they did not foresee any difficulties as the Salvation Army at that time was still in its formative years and the aggressive sectarianism had not yet raised its ugly head.

It was a matter of pride that the local children should have a band when they took part in the annual Whitsuntide walk with the Lancashire and Cheshire Band of Hope procession. A brass band were vital to the procession to accompany their hymn singing during their walk. Whilst the walks were a cultural tradition, they also sent a symbolic message out to the bystanders, that here was a group of Christians proud to proclaim their faith in public and invite others to join them. Perhaps this symbolism lay behind the newly appointed Salvation Army Officer, Captain William Greenwood, to refuse the band’s permission to lead the procession. The bandsmen were deeply upset at their officer’s refusal and they did their best to persuade the officer to change

15 *Frank Heaton recorded conversations Ancoats Lad the Recollections of Mick Burke page 20*

his mind. “when asked the reason for refusing to allow them to do the procession, the officer told them, that the Major of the Lancashire District would not allow it, so they wrote to the Major informing him that the procession was on a Saturday Afternoon and that there was no meeting in connection with the Army that required their services. They stated that it was their own time and that they would be back in time for the open air service. The reply to this letter was that if they played for the Ragged School, they would not be allowed to play for the Army again. In response, they wrote to the General, William Booth who replied that he placed every confidence in the Major and of course he could not see his way clear to interfere”.<sup>16</sup> The bandsmen were deeply upset but felt that they could not break their word and disappoint the children. They therefore decided that they would lead the procession and try to resolve the dispute later.

I spent many hours searching the archives of the local newspapers for that year without finding any trace of the dispute. A reply to my letter from the researcher Miss Rebecca Hine of the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre gave me the answer. In an issue of the War Cry dated 20th August 1884 it mentions “though there is a cloud passing over us, yet praise to the Lord souls are being brought to the Saviour.” She made a personal comment, “often we find that negative occurrences were not made public as this may have been bad for moral and we hold no private letters relating to the matter.”<sup>17</sup> The outcome of the dispute when the bandsmen were told that they would never be

16 *Unknown A Brief History of the Miles Platting Mission published by Thoms. Sowler and Sons Limited page 8*

17 *Rebecca J Hine, Researcher, Letter from The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre. Dated 19th July 2004*

able to play again for the Salvation Army, was that many of them left along with some of the congregation. A total of forty in number left taking their instruments with them. A letter from Charles Holt, the son of one of these bandsmen wrote, “that is how they got to be called the Forty Thieves”<sup>18</sup>. Appendix 4

Regulations for Salvation Army Field Officers dated 1888 which may have been influenced by the happenings of the Manchester IV Corps to legalise the ownership problems reads “All instruments in every band are to be the property of the Salvation Army no matter by whom they may have been purchased or through whom they may have been presented.”<sup>19</sup> Ms Hines comments in her letter, “as both of the Officers and Regulations were published later than the events in 1884, she cannot say whether the regulations were already in place at the time.”

The final word from General Booth regarding bands laying down what he termed “our general rule for them — they are to work for the good of the Corps and for the salvation of souls and nothing else.”<sup>20</sup>

## 5. The Wandering Years

After being turned away from the Salvation Army the Forty Thieves held a meeting to decide what they should do. ‘They had tried very hard to resolve the dispute but having been told that they would not be allowed to play in any future Salvation Army

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Alstone Letter from the Personal Papers - Appendix 4

<sup>19</sup> Salvation Army Orders and Regulations for Field Officers 1888 Part V page 195

<sup>20</sup> Robert Sandall, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd 1950 History of the Salvation Army Vol II 1878 — 1886 page 119

services, they were men that were burning with desire to do something for the glory of God. They felt they could not sit idle. Some of them had known what sin was, they had indulged in it to a large extent, and the change they had realised from the power of sin to saving grace made them think what was to become of them if they ceased to be active workers.’<sup>21</sup> The decision was made that they would stick together and form their own Mission. ‘When criticised for taking their own instruments with them, well the answer to this charge is this, who had more right to them than the public. It was a public duty that the men were turned away for. The men had worked hard for the instruments.’<sup>22</sup>

This first meeting was held in the home of Mr. And Mrs. Birkead of 25 Varley Street and they elected their first President from among them, Mr. Mark Smalley of Rochdale Road. It was to this address that they returned after their open-air services. When the weather became too cold for outdoor services and the followers too many to be accommodated in each others’ homes, they hired their first hall in the Lowe Street Temperance Hall. This was a room that they could use during the mid week for services and other activities, and on Sundays they rented the Walker Street Temperance Hall. This came to be packed so much so that they had to find larger more suitable accommodation over the Co-operative Hall, also in Walker Street, at a rental cost of 30 shillings per week. ‘The work was good outside but in this hall the miracles of saving Grace that the labours of the Mission was blessed with was something wonderful’.<sup>23</sup>

21     *Anonymous writer Brief History of Miles Platting dated 1898- page 6 and 7*

22     *Anonymous writer Brief History of Miles Platting dated 1898 — page 7*

23     *Anonymous Writer Brief History of Miles Platting dated 1898- page 9 and 10*

The Mission still followed the same service format as that of the Salvation Army with the use of a penitent form as described by H E Tidmarsh “thus, as a matter of fact from the nature of these Mission Chapels are Methodist in their mode and spirit whether nominally Methodist in origin or not, the ordinary Salvation Army Service is a copy of ordinary Methodist Missionary Service advanced ranter type, and the body seems to be fed from such sources’.<sup>24</sup>

“The Co-operative Hall soon became too small and they again had to look for larger premises. They then moved into the St. Georges School on Oldham Road, which had stood empty for some considerable time and was extremely dirty. With a great many willing hands, they soon had it ready, but it cost them over £100 to furnish the rooms and provide forms for the congregation to sit on. The work of persuading people to seek Salvation was greater in this new hall and a description in the Mission booklet brings into focus the intensity of the Evangelicalism of these early years; The Bible and Hymn Book took the place of beer jug and cards, these are the characters that the Mission had been successful with, oh the power of a brass band for Mission work especially when its members are Christian men. Such has been the endeavour of the officials only to have men that would play with singleness of purpose to God’s glory. Here is a case I remember once hearing an old man giving his testimony who had sunk very low in sin so low that he thought life a terrible burden (he was standing on Rochdale Road Bridge. Whilst in this frame of mind Satan had put it into his heart to destroy himself and he was wondering in what way to do it, when his attention was



drawn to some sound in the distance. Rivetted to the spot it drew nearer and nearer, until the strains of a Brass Band reached him. He started to follow the sound, when he soon came across the band and followed them to the Hall. The result was he came to the Cross and found pardon, a miracle of saving grace.”<sup>25</sup>

I listened to many accounts of what the open air services were like in the heady days after their break away from the Salvation Army. At the junction of Oldham Road, Varley Street and Collyhurst Street on opposite corners stood two large popular public houses. On one corner would stand the Salvation Army, holding their Saturday night open air services. On the other side would stand the Mission. Both bands and preachers, tried to out voice each other in order to attract the largest numbers back to their halls. The Mission I was told with much glee, were more successful in getting the larger number of followers. A favourite hymn to march back to the hall, from the Sankey and Moody collection of hymns, was entitled ‘Daniel’s Band’ <sup>26</sup>

Standing by a purpose true,  
Heeding God’s command,  
Honour them the faithful few  
All hail to Daniel’s Band

Dare to be a Daniel  
Dare to stand alone  
Dare to have a purpose firm  
Dare to make it known.

25     *Anonymous writer A Brief History of Miles Platting Mission page 12 and 13*  
26     *Ira D Sankey Sacred Songs and Solos Twelve Hundred Pieces Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd*

These words based on the Biblical Book of Daniel chapter 6 verse 16 of Daniel in the Lions Den<sup>27</sup> could have meant so much to the early members of the Miles Platting Mission, as they must have felt very alone and isolated at the beginning of their bold venture and felt justified in their fight against what they perceived as the narrow path of the Salvation Army which excluded joining with other Christian churches for the mutual benefit of the community. Nowhere in my research of those early days is there any reference of the word sectarianism, which in hindsight we would attribute this early form of exclusiveness. Much of the documentary evidence, express the hurt and anger that was felt at that time.

They were unfortunate to lose their President, Mr. Mark Smalley who died whilst they were at St George's Hall, without having finished the formation of the Trust Deed. They thought it best to seek a President outside of the Mission, a gentleman by the name of Mr. S. Cockerill who had to retire after a short time through ill health. They then sought a President from within their own congregation and they elected Mr. Charles Frost, one of their own from their Salvation Army days. He soon had to face the difficult task of finding a new hall after the St. George's School was sold. They managed to acquire the use of a former flannelette factory in Berkshire Street and again had to spend money on clearing away the rubbish and make it habitable in order to continue their work. They had been experiencing difficulties in getting a Trust Deed formed for several years but gradually what prevailed was a more business like attitude of their new President and his vision for the Mission's future of not wanting a repetition of what had

happened when the St. George's School was sold. He started to look towards the financial security of the Mission and persuaded them to consider building a Mission Hall for themselves. He commenced a Tract Society<sup>28</sup> to raise money to go towards the building fund. They found a piece of land on Oldham Road a short distance from the junction of Varley Street. The owner, Mr James Marshall Beckett offered it for sale or to rent. They chose to rent and with just £84 in the bank they set about building their own Mission Hall.

## 5. Project Build

Having found the land and finally secured an agreement with the owner for the lease, the members had to search among themselves as to how to obtain the funds to build the Mission. Six men from among them, all volunteers came forward to pledge themselves. I have been led to understand from my discussions these men were all among the Salvation Army bandsmen that had been expelled from the Salvation Army. The names, addresses and occupations of the six men are as follows: Mr. Charles Frost of 47 Padgett Street, Rochdale Road, confectioner, Mr. Benjamin Davies of 9 William Lee Street, boiler maker, Mr. Edmund Bennell of Gaylor Street, chair-maker, Mr Samuel Hughes of Garrett Street, hardware dealer, James William Prince of Varley Street, claypipe manufacturer, William Hatton of Hamilton Street, Collyhurst, dyer. Each of them for himself, his heirs, executors, administrators and assignees thereafter called the

28 *Tract Society - Open University A425 Evangelicals, Women & Community in Nineteenth Century Britain Study Guide page 130 'A pamphlet type of publication by which authors could easily and cheaply disseminate their views to an increasingly literate British Population.*

borrowers.<sup>29</sup> Appendix 5. These must have been very brave men to pledge themselves and their descendants to such a huge debt. They hired a solicitor, Mr. John Champion Needham and an architect Mr F W Dixon whose offices were at Trevelyan Buildings Manchester. Mr. Hilton of the Manchester Town Hall Planning department informed me, that Mr Dixon was more noted for designing mills than churches. Their instructions to him were for two halls. “The upper main body of the church was to seat 650 people with a gallery above for the choir. The lower hall was for use as a Sunday school with mid-week activities and services, they would want to accommodate up to 350 persons, they would therefore require many side rooms, a kitchen and indoor toilets (separate ones for men and women).”<sup>30</sup> Appendix 6. These would have been a luxury at that time, as outside or communal toilets were the norm. The estimated cost of the building was £2,500 and with furnishings it came to over £3,000. Instructions to the architect were for a simple building with plain interior in order to have few distractions from the words of the Gospel and their preachers. This would be in keeping to the form of Salvation Army worship.

Oldham Road, the site of their new Mission was also a road containing many retail shops as well as churches, so provision was made for two shops to be incorporated in the ground floor front elevation. This would generate income for the Mission but the premises were then leased to the Liverpool & District Banking Company Ltd. This was a company who allowed its members to take part in a Penny Bank scheme very much in the

29     *Original Mortgage Deed dated 1st July 1898 Appendix 5*

30     *F W Dixon Architect — Copies of the Original Plans Proposed Mission Hall  
Miles Platting No 2849 - submitted 8th December 1897 Appendix 6*

ethos of the Victorian Self help. The Lord Mayor of Manchester Mr. William Henry Vaudrey and Mr William Shufflebottom, haberdasher of Oldham Road, laid the foundation stones in the early summer of 1898.<sup>31</sup> The Mission building was finally completed and opened for worship the 13th February 1899 and the Deed of Covenant was finally drawn up.

## **6. The Grand Opening**

The Lady Mayoress of Manchester, Mrs William Henry Vaudrey in the presence of her husband, the Lord Mayor of Manchester, formally opened the Mission on the afternoon of Saturday the 11th February 1899. “The Lady Mayoress was presented with a key by Mrs F W Dickson having unlocked the door declared the building open amidst applause. Subsequently a meeting was held in the large hall, the Lord Mayor presided. Mr Frost. the President, gave an account of the cost of the building and how, in the two years of fundraising, the members of the congregation had managed to raise between £600 —to £700. Mr Dixon, the architect gave a description of the building. “There had not been an attempt to put up an elaborate structure. The necessities of the case did not warrant anything of that kind. At the same time they had a building that would add something to the cheerfulness and brightness of the City (hear hear)”. The Lord Mayor gave a speech on how important in his opinion Mission halls were and necessity in a working class district like Miles Platting. He attributed the reduction in drunkenness, disease and crime to be the work of Mission halls, even though the population increased

31     *Extract from Manchester City News July 27th 1951 On the Occasion of the 67th Anniversary.*

in the City by 50,000 in the last ten years. He continued to say how he had noticed a change in the working class population who were getting more divided from their manufacturers, Their owners no longer lived next to the mills and factories and so lost touch with their workforce, <sup>32</sup> Appendix 7

Among the personal papers of Mr T Alston were found one from Mrs Salt, daughter of the President Mr. Frost, at the time, in which she recalls as a ten year old child, the opening, with a 'Grand Bazaar'. "This was when Shufflebottoms were a large wholesale and retail merchants on Oldham Road held a fancy glass and pots stall"<sup>33</sup> With its own meeting hall that could be used as much as they wanted without restrictions of other users they apportioned the work of running the Mission. Mr S Hughes was the Treasurer and was one of the signatories on the mortgage loan. Mr. E Bennell also a signatory on the mortgage loan, he became Sunday School Superintendent and was supported in this work by his wife and Mrs. Lingard of Garibaldi Street. Mr. T. Alstone or Pop as he came to be known, taught the new recruits to the band how to play brass instruments. Mrs. Alstone helped with the womens meetings. The McAnulty Brothers, Neil, Edward, George and William played a vital part in the Missionary work, as too did their offspring. A choir was formed and with the Band's accompaniment played all the music for the hymns during outdoor services. They also played for the singing when marching back to the hall and again at indoor services, the band opened the service and played at the close. The organist played for all others. This way, the band had to participate in the actual service and not be isolated in any way, taking their share

32 *Manchester Guardian* February 13th 1899 Appendix 7

33 *Mr Harold Houltram deceased 1915— 2000 - Personal Papers*

of readings from the Gospel or giving their testimony or praying at the penitent form should they be moved to do so. Many of the bandsmen would come forward to preach a sermon or to take the service as required. There are no records that any women played in the band or held major positions in the Church hierarchy as trustees, but their support in the running of the bible classes and womens meetings are all recorded. The Mission finally became acknowledged as part of the community and continued to take part in the Whitsuntide walks with other churches without participating in the sectarianism that drove them to their independence.

I close this brief history of the Miles Platting Mission with an extract from the Preface of the first documented history of the Mission in 1898 “of how our friends, the members of the Salvation Army will pardon its introduction on the account and necessity as I think after 14 years the feelings of pain and irritation which was then caused will have somewhat calmed down”.<sup>34</sup> Appendix 8, this gives clear indication of the hurt that was felt by the early founders of the Mission and how the need to seek reconciliation in the sight of God and to make peace with their estranged friends in the Salvation Army.

## **7. Conclusion**

As the year 1900 opened, the Mission and its congregation were looking forward to a new Century in a new Church and the use of the band as a tool in their open-air services to attract people to enter the Mission and to hear the word of God. The Mission

<sup>34</sup> *Anonymous Writer A Brief History of the Miles Platting Mission Thomas Sowler and Sons Limited, Cannon Street Manchester - Appendix 8*

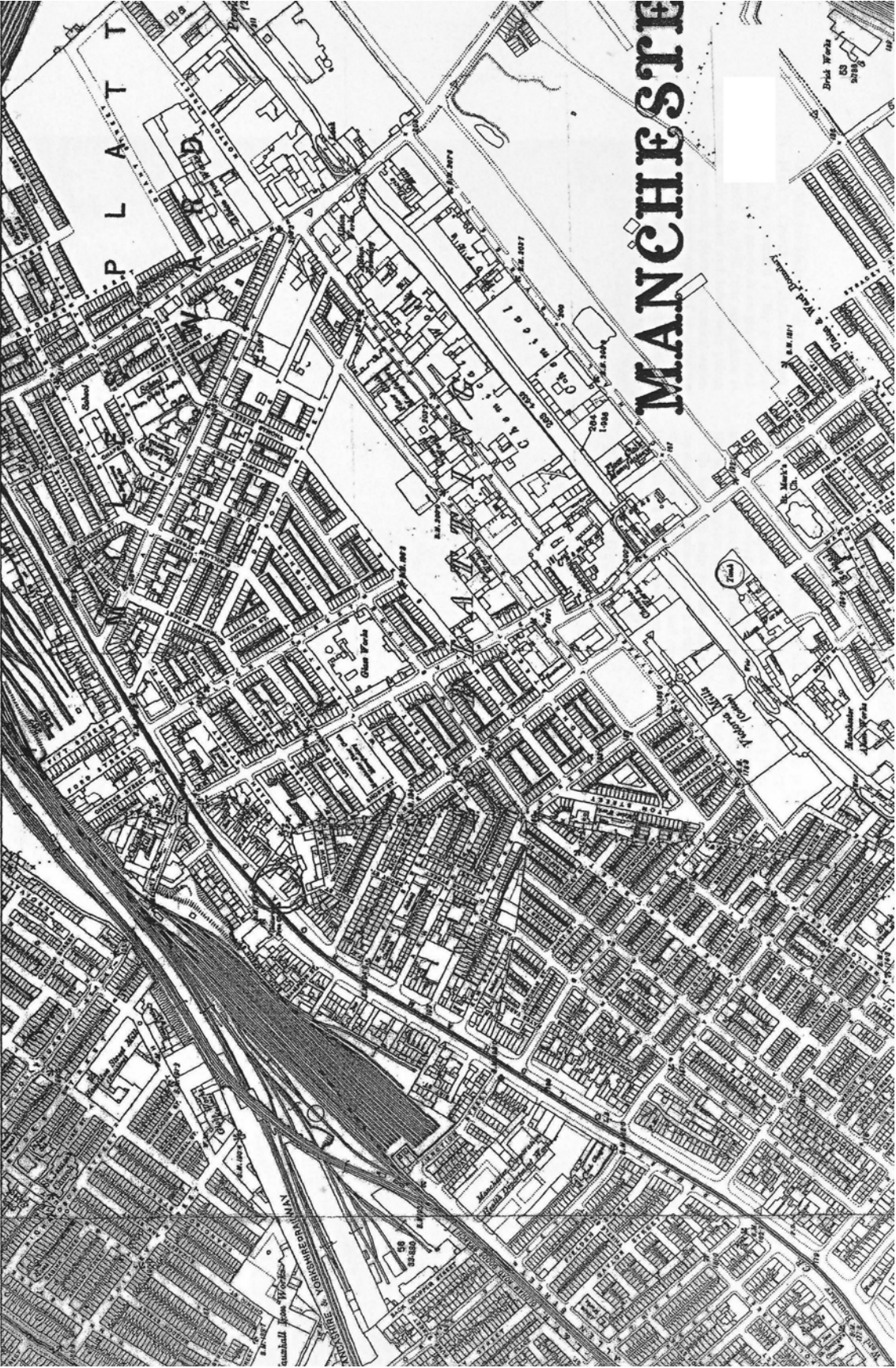
created a sense of community. The Mission survived two World Wars and minor damage after the heavy bombing in World War II. The policy of slum clearance broke up the community surrounding the Mission, forcing the surviving loyal descendants to travel long distances to the meetings. When it finally closed its doors one hundred and eleven years after its inception, in the presence of many of the descendants of the Forty Thieves, the hymn singing accompanied by the band was as rousing a sound at the end as it was, at the beginning.

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Rev. William Muzzell, the Rector of St. Mark's Church in Holland Street, Ancoats, was incensed at the conditions under which the people in his parish lived.

per day, the Bradford Gas Works, the Alum Works, the Glue Factory, the Soap and Bone Works, the Horse Slaughtering Works etc., all add to the bad stench over Ancoats where the death rate is higher than anywhere else in the kingdom . . ."

in 1889. It was the first of its kind built to "infuse light into a poor area". The basement had a large soup kitchen and enamel baths for men and women (in an area where no dwelling had a fitted bath). For a penny a hot bath and towel could be had, with reductions for whole families going together!

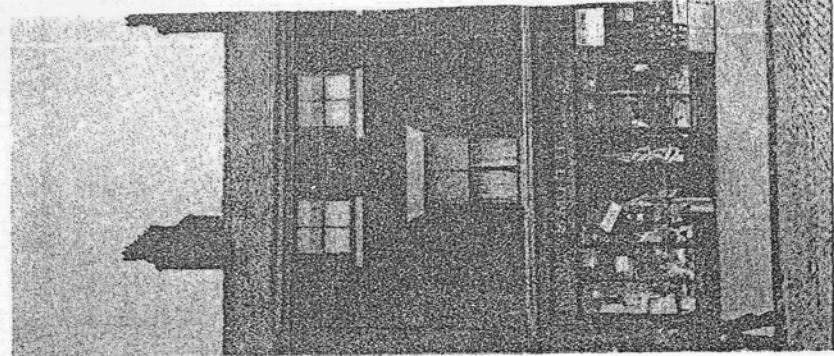
This was immensely popular especially on the Saturday before Whit Monday in 1891, when 305 people had a bath that day, and a total of 8,000 baths were taken that year. The ground floor had a Reading Room, Small Library, a Job Club and Writing Room, with instruction to teach reading and writing to adults who wished. Instruction was also given in sewing, knitting and other skills.

He instigated help for the people of the area and this coincided with a flush of charitable works in Manchester, and resulted in the People's Institute, shown here, opening

from innumerable chimneys, chemical works, and so many other works of an offensive nature . . . the City Health Works (refuge department) deals with 625 carts of rubbish



THE PEOPLES INSTITUTE, HOLLAND STREET, ANCOATS, MANCHESTER.  
(From a Photograph by Mr. J. Andler)



Part of the improvements in the Ancoats  
the building of the Victoria Dwellings.  
This picture from 1891 shows the sh



Sect. 18. Open-Air Marches.

The drum.

4. The Commanding Officer is authorised to use the drum for the purpose of a pentent-form, or to collect on, and to have it carried and beaten whenever he may think it desirable.

The Band a Brigade.

5. Bands shall generally be used in the open-air as a distinct Brigade, apart from the Soldiers, except in small Corps, and at special times where the Commanding Officer has arranged for a united meeting of the various sections of the Corps.

Salvation the end.

6. Band Open-Air Meetings must be conducted with a view to impressing the audience with the immediate necessity of seeking salvation, and in all such meetings a considerable portion of the time must be devoted to exhortation, personal testimony, salvation singing, and prayer.

Don't disturb the sick.

7. The Bandmaster, or other leader of the Open-Air Meeting, must not permit any annoyance or disturbance of any sick person in the vicinity of his meeting. Upon receiving any intimation of illness, the Band shall cease playing or singing, and, after a short prayer for the sick person, move away quietly to another place. The Band shall not again meet near the house, or play past it while on the march, until enquiries have been made, and assurances received, that the necessity for adopting this course has ceased.

SECTION 18.—OPEN-AIR MARCHES.

Remember the women.

1. In Open-Air Marches the Band must not march at such a rate as to deter women Soldiers and elderly comrades from joining in the procession.

And to sing.

2. The playing of the Band and the singing of the procession shall be alternate. When the Band has finished playing, suitable songs or choruses must be started by the responsible Officer.

Under leadership of Singing Corps and Brigade.

3. The leader of the Corps Singing Brigade shall be responsible for the singing, and in his absence, or in Corps where there is no Singing Brigade, the Sergeant-Major shall lead the singing. Where the Sergeant-Major

Indoor Meetings.

Sect 19.

is not able to do so, the Commanding Officer shall appoint some other Local Officer to act for him.

Don't disturb churches.

4. No religious service of any kind, either indoors or outdoors, must, under any circumstances, be disturbed by Band playing. Bandmasters must acquaint themselves with the hours at which the usual religious services are held in the various places of worship, and if the Open-Air March cannot avoid passing one or more of them, the Band must cease playing within one hundred yards' distance of such place of religious worship. This Regulation shall apply with equal force to Open-Air Mission Services, and also to Corps Brigade Open-Air Meetings.

5. When a Band is marching for the purpose of picking up the various Brigades at the close of an Open-Air Meeting it must cease playing and singing upon approaching any Brigade which has not concluded its meeting.

6. The Band must cease playing in the presence of restive horses, and only to save life or prevent serious accident should any Bandman lay hands on horse or man.

Or horses.

7. Where there is any threat of prosecution by local authorities for playing a Musical Instrument, no Bandman shall be required to play. In such cases, volunteers should be called for. Men with families, or men whose health would be likely to suffer from imprisonment, being exempt, the young and vigorous should be encouraged to fight such battles.

Who to fight.

SECTION 19.—INDOOR MEETINGS.

1. The Band shall attend and take part at such Indoor Meetings as are fixed by the Divisional Officer and notified on the Corps Standard, as well as at such other Indoor Meetings as may from time to time be arranged and ordered by the Divisional Officer.

What Meetings.

2. When the Open-Air Procession arrives at the Hall or Citadel the Band may halt near the entrance, and play until the Soldiers have passed in. The Bandmen must then proceed at once to the platform, or other places allotted to them, ready to assist in the opening services prompt to time.

Arrival at Hall.

6, Grosvenor Row  
Dumfries

Re: Mile Planting Mission

I was told by my father about the founding of the mission. I understand it was the band which broke away from the Salvation Army. They broke away because the officer refused permission for them to lead a Band of Hope for provision for them. <sup>at least</sup> Holland St Ragged School. The band left and kept the instruments that's <sup>how</sup> ~~was~~ they got the name of Forty Thieves.

---

They opened out in a room over a iron foundry in Berkshire St corner of Lower Vickers St and then they moved into Colham Rd opposite to St John Church I believe it belong to the ~~Street~~ Scotch Church (it was between the Osborne Theatre and the Ram Inn) then they moved into their present building.

I recalled there were some very good people at that time Mr Frost was the leader, and a great preacher, and Mr Usher and Mr Ashworth on the organ and Mr Fenton who son Charlie took over the organ. There ~~was~~ were the Mc Kully family and others My Father used to carry the flag when the band paraded on Sunday afternoon.

S.o. When you see Charlie Fenton remember me to him he ~~may~~ know who I am.

Your Servant

Charles Hall

1

10



2/11/1964

one thousand eight hundred

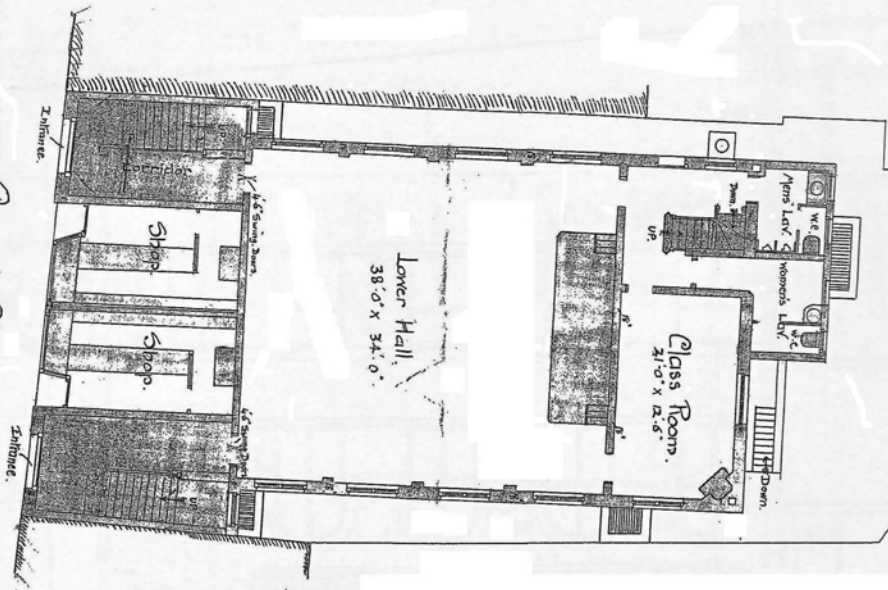
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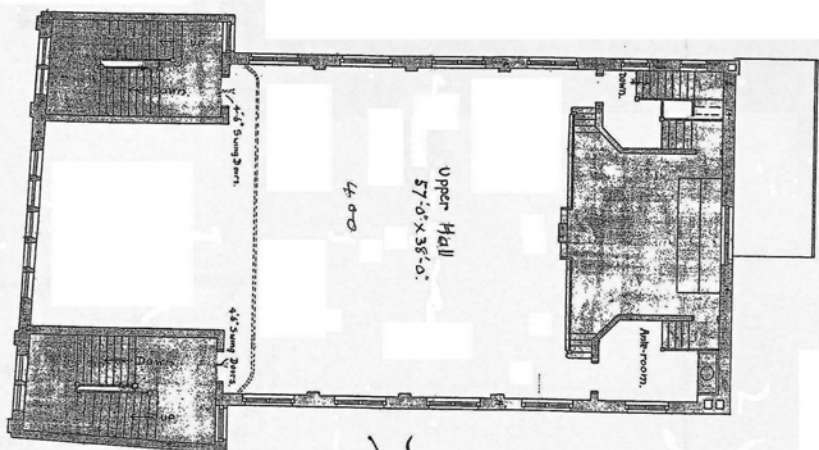
# Appendix 6.

Proposed Mission Hall  
 111 E. 11th St.  
 HATTING.

Ground Plan.



1st Floor Plan.



No. 2849

City of Minneapolis.

Approved for utilities by the  
 City Engineer and without  
 to strengthen or stability of the  
 building and work must be executed  
 in every particular in strict accordance  
 with the City Laws in force with re-  
 spect to New Streets and Buildings, etc.  
 This approval is granted in force only  
 in case the buildings are commenced  
 within two years from this date.  
 Dated this 8 day of Dec. 1897

*Mr. [Signature]* Chairman.

*John [Signature]* City Surveyor.

F. W. Dixon.

# Appendix 6A.

No. 2849

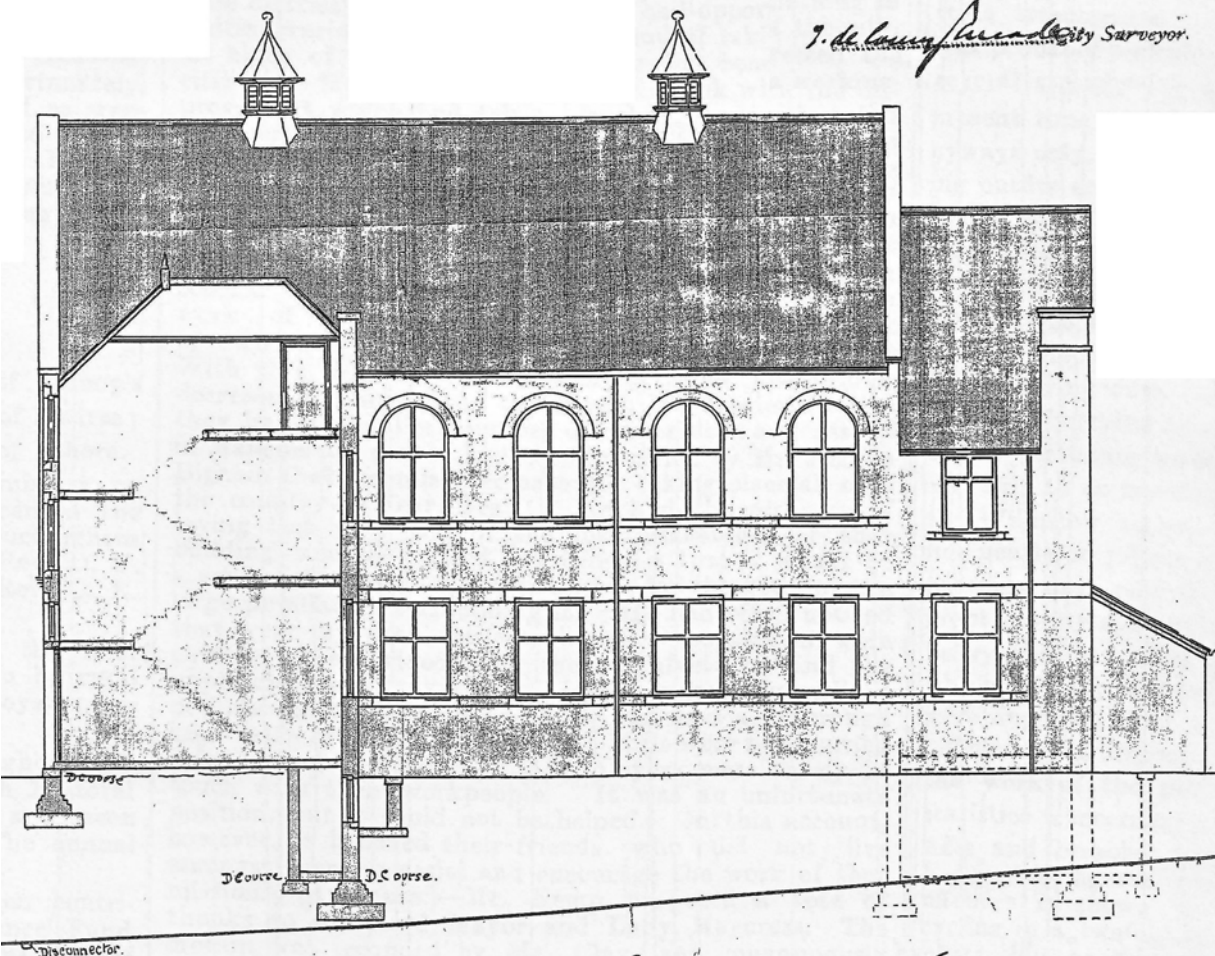
City of Manchester.

Approved so far as relates to the Bye Laws only and without reference to strength or stability of the structure. The building and work must be executed in every particular in strict accordance with the Bye Laws in force with respect to New Streets and Buildings; &c. This approval to remain in force only in case the buildings are commenced within two years from this date.

Dated this 8 day of Dec 1897

*McGriffin*.....Chairman.

*J. de launey*.....City Surveyor.



Side Elevation.

F.W. Dixon.  
Architect.

General Building



Miles Plating Mission were opened on Saturday afternoon by the Lady Mayoress of Manchester (Mrs. W. H. Vaudrey). The buildings, situated in Oldham Road, are of handsome design, and are faced with Ruabon bricks, with Yorkshire stone dressings. On the ground floor there is a large room which will accommodate 250 persons, and a number of class rooms. Above is the large hall, which will seat 600 people. The Lady Mayoress, who was presented with a key by Mrs. F. W. Dixon, having unlocked the door, declared the building open, amidst applause. Subsequently a meeting was held in the large hall. The Lord Mayor presided.—Mr. C. Frost said the cost of the building was £2,500. Within about two years they had raised between £600 and £700. The remainder of the funds required had been borrowed. Mr. Dixon, the architect, gave a description of the building. There had not been, he said, an attempt to put up an elaborate structure. The necessities of the case did not warrant anything of that kind. At the same time they had a building which would add something to the cheerfulness and brightness of that part of the city. (Hear, hear.)—The Lord Mayor, having expressed the opinion that mission halls were a necessity in a working-class district like that, said he had had opportunities of visiting various parts of the city, and of taking part in all kinds of meetings promoted for the benefit of the citizens. He had been particularly struck with the improvement which had taken place during the last ten years in the social condition of the people. The police court returns of drunkenness had decreased in a marvellous manner. The number of convictions for drunkenness in Manchester last year was one thousand less than it was ten years ago, notwithstanding the fact that during this time the population had increased from 500,000 to 550,000. He attributed this largely to the work of their mission halls, and also to the work of Voluntary and Board schools.—(Hear, hear.) With this decrease in drunkenness there was also a decrease in crime. At the recent Manchester Assizes they had the smallest number of criminals at any assizes in Manchester, and he had been informed by Mr. Justice Bigham that a similar decrease was taking place all over the country.—(Hear, hear.) He had the pleasure of laying last year one of the memorial-stones of that building, and he trusted and believed that it would be a centre of mission and social work for the good of the large population surrounding it. He had often noticed that year by year the working-class population were getting more divided from the manufacturers and the upper classes. In years gone by the manufacturer lived perhaps next door to his mill, and had a thorough knowledge of all his workpeople. Mills were now turned into limited companies, and employers were rarely in touch with their workpeople. It was an unfortunate position, but it could not be helped. On this account, however, it behoved their friends who did not live amongst them to assist and encourage the work of that mission.—(Applause.)—Mr. Kemp proposed a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clay and unanimously adopted.

FOUNDED 1884.

## Appendix 8.

## P R E F A C E.

*For the Saving of Men and God's Glory.*

# Miles Platting Mission.

A BRIEF HISTORY IN CONNECTION WITH  
THE ABOVE MISSION,

*From the Summer of 1884 to the  
Year ending 1898,*

BY ONE OF ITS MEMBERS.

It is with regret that the writer has to touch upon a matter in connection with the history of the Miles Platting Mission, but it is necessary that it should be introduced to show why the Mission was founded. Our friends, the members of the Salvation Army (the writer hopes), will pardon its introduction on account of its necessity, as I think after fourteen years, the feelings of pain and irritation which was then caused, will have somewhat calmed down. There is room for all—the world's harvest is great, but the labourers are few. There is much more that might be written in connection with the dispute; as most of you know the officers are removed about every six months, the officer prior to the dispute told one of our bandsmen that he had orders to break up the Band, but he could not find in his heart to destroy an auxiliary that was so powerful for good in the district, but he said they are going to send one that will do; asked why they wanted to break up the Band, he said he could not tell. That officer went away, and one did come, and he carried out his orders with a vengeance.